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Is Folklore a Discipline?

by RICHARD M. DORSON

AT a meeting of the American Folklore Society back in 1957, a panel of two well-known scholars and a dentist who wrote children's books on folklore addressed themselves to a topic such as I am presenting here. At that time the society was treading slippery ground between the pulls of amateur enthusiasts and university professors. Many of the academics themselves felt only a secondary interest in folklore, having been trained in other subject matters. The first American Ph.D. in folklore was only granted in 1953. At any rate our writer of juveniles bounced up and down on the podium flailing at the pedants who squeezed all the juice out of folklore with their dusty monographs while enviously criticizing the successful nonacademic authors whose folklore books sold widely. Seizing on the word 'discipline' in the title of the panel's topic, he expressed his astonishment at this thorny term, questioned its meaning in the present context, and asserted that he had queried a number of his friends on its signification to no avail. They were mystified at this esoteric jargon of the pedagogues.

This episode highlights the difficulties faced by the advocate of folklore as a discipline. Part of his audience, who lie outside the university, may not even know what he is talking about. As I employ the term here, I think of discipline in both a pragmatic and a philosophical sense. Pragmatically, the discipline exists if it can reach an intellectual audience with scholarly works, earn a place in the accepted fields of learning of its day, preserve and enlarge its area of knowledge, attract converts and young disciples, and perpetuate itself for another generation. Philosophically, the discipline exists if it can lay claim to distinctive theoretical concepts and empirical data important for man's knowledge about his world. Our title question needs an answer on both counts, for there is little point in seeking to prove the intellectual validity of folklore studies if there are no teachers, students, readers, writers, or followers of such studies, in short no constituency of the folklore-

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minded. Accordingly I shall discuss the question under the heads of (1) the power base, and (2) the intellectual base.

I. The Power Base

In treating first the power base, I reverse my own chronology of interests. My discovery of the subject matter of folklore came long before my awareness of the *Realpolitik* of folklore studies in the academy. Circumstances dictated that, after initially succumbing to the fascination of Andrew Lang and Max Müller, Francis James Child and Cecil Sharp, I have ended up immersed in budget conferences, promotion and tenure decisions, office maintenance, and the thousand and one details and crises of departmental administration. Yet attention to these matters is essential to the survival of folklore as a discipline in the United States, for today the university department provides the chief power base for the would-be folklorist.

By the power base I mean any arena in which the study of folklore can flourish. Throughout the one hundred and sixty year history of our subject, since the Grimms published the first volume of their *Household Tales*, the isolated collector and independent scholar have often registered substantial contributions. We can think of Vincent Stuckey Lean in the British Museum compiling his scrapbooks of proverbial *Collectanea*, published after his death in four volumes; of Hugh Miller writing the traditional history of Cromarty in a corner of Scotland; of the Episcopal clergyman, Harry Middleton Hyatt, by his lonesome amassing and tape-recording thousands of supernatural folk beliefs in Illinois and Negro hoodoo and witchcraft beliefs in the south; and of the enigmatic James Carpenter, who on six years of consecutive Harvard Sheldon Traveling Fellowships collected ballads and other traditional forms in Scotland, slept by his collections every night, without ever publishing any portion, and has just now, when professional folklorists fortuitously established contact with him, deposited his materials in the Library of Congress Folksong Archive. A discipline may well benefit handsomely from these idiosyncratic activities, but without some frame of organization to digest and assimilate them these scattered works would disappear in the bowels of the library or molder in the

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collector's attic. The classic case in American folklore is the Duke University professor of English, Frank C. Brown, who assiduously collected all manner of North Carolina folk items which saw the light of day only when a team of professional folklorists collaborated to organize, annotate, and interpret them in the seven volumes now well known as *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*. A comparable situation in England involves the valuable type indexing of folk narratives in English periodicals undertaken by F. J. Norton, librarian at Cambridge University, as a private pursuit. During my year in Cambridge, 1964–65, Professor Edward M. Wilson, longtime member and former secretary of the Folklore Society, introduced me to Mr Norton and, astonished at the scope and value of his work, I promptly put Katharine Briggs in touch with him, with the happy consequence that the *Dictionary of British Folktales* incorporated the F. J. Norton collection.

These examples help bear out my contention that folklore, like any field of learning, needs its community of scholars to establish a discipline. There is I would say no single formula for that community, which may take the form of an antiquarian or learned society, a professorial chair and seminar, a research institute, a museum or archives with a field staff, a dining club, a university department. All these options have proved successful, according to the historical circumstances and traditions of a given country. The organization, like the study, of folklore responds to tradition, and traditions change, so that what works in the nineteenth century may well not work in the twentieth in the same country. Being a fringe subject, folklore has veered between private and academic scholarship, and between the conceptions of the performing folk artist and the theoretician. In a number of European nations the professorial chair of folklore provides a nucleus for continuous instruction, fieldwork, and formulation of theory. Hautala's history of the Finnish folklorists clearly reveals how the chair of folklore at the University of Helsinki maintained the momentum and continuity of the illustrious achievements of the Finns: their stellar theorists, not only the Krohns and Aarne but other memorable folklorists such as A. E. Ahlquist, M. A. Castrén, and E. Salmelainen; their fabulous archives and nation-wide network of schoolteacher-collectors; their prestigious Folklore Fellows Communications series. But the professorship is buttressed by an

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urban folklore organization, the Finnish Literature Society, founded in 1831, and by governmental support for its archives and library. Here indeed is a strong power base, the academic chair and the private society closely interlocked and undergirded by a national grant.

Another likely folklore power base can be seen in the research institute, often in Europe divorced from, and seemingly socially inferior to, the teaching university. A handsomely equipped folklore research institute, described in a current number of Indiana University's *Journal of the Folklore Institute* by Jan Brunvand of the University of Utah, who spent a year there, is the Romanian Institute of Folklore and Ethnography in Bucharest. Its director, Mihai Pop, is also the folklore professor at the University of Bucharest, and so links the teaching and researching sides of folklore. The Romanian institute with its staff of a hundred performs many functions we now consider essential to folklore research: tape transcription and reproduction, film and slide processing, housing of archives and library, initiation of systematic field trips, issuing of journals and monographs. Whether a folklore research institute comprises a community of scholars or a group of technicians, and if the latter, whether it serves a community of scholars, are questions that perhaps will receive different answers in different cases.

To mention two research institutes with which I have had some acquaintance: the School of Scottish Studies and the Irish Folklore Commission. Neither is called a research institute, and yet until recently, when both became associated with lectures on folklore at the University of Edinburgh and University College, Dublin, that seemed their appropriate designation. The School of Scottish Studies even suppressed the term 'folklore' in its title, and in that of its journal, *Scottish Studies*, although its work deals entirely with oral traditions, folklife, and place-name and dialect studies. One prominent professor on the committee administering the School of Scottish Studies declared, so I was told, that the School should remain a nonteaching unit of the university, and amass source materials for scholars to use. Similarly, at Dublin, the Irish Folklore Commission did not, until the recent appointment of Bo Almquist to succeed James Delargy as professor of folklore, actually become involved in teaching. As a consequence, the

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visitor to Edinburgh and Dublin in the 1950's and '60's noticed the absence of students in these splendid potential centres of folkloric activity, although they welcomed outside scholars most hospitably. Also he observed that little publication issued from these centers. The full-time fieldworkers of the IFC resident in Irish counties considered themselves as collectors, with a mandate to garner the harvest, especially the Gaelic harvest, before the flowers had all withered. In Dublin, Sean O'Sullivan worked prodigiously to archive the mountains of material always pressing in upon the central office. The excellent *Folktales of Ireland* volume which he kindly consented to assemble for my Folktales of the World series represented a rare luxurious excursion into the publishing of the accumulated texts. More of a cadre of folklorists existed at Edinburgh, since the fieldworkers, such as Hamish Henderson, John MacInnes, and Donald MacDonald, resided there in between their protracted field trips. Sitting around the long table in the School's meeting room for morning coffee and afternoon tea the visitor felt a friendly glow of kindred spirits. Yet the School had not made its impact in the university hierarchy, where only the professors can advance the subject as a discipline. My old mentor from my graduate school days at Harvard, Kenneth Jackson, who gave me my only formal instruction in folklore when I was combing the Harvard faculty for guidance, told me that on his return to the University of Edinburgh the responsibilities of Celtic studies had prevented his giving the attention he wished to folklore studies.

Then there is the society, of amateurs, professionals, or an uneasy mixture of the two, as a possible power base for folklorists. In the United States at the present time the large professional organizations often seem to carry more prestige and influence than the universities. A physicist or sociologist, say, will think of himself as a member of his discipline first and of his university faculty second. The American Folklore Society has registered enormous gains over the past quarter of a century, and reached the point in the mid-1960's where it could meet successfully as an independent body. Its growth in numbers and professionalism is directly related to the production of new Ph.D.'s in folklore; yet compared to the major fields in which the Ph.D. is offered by thirty or forty institutions, folklore, with only three universities (Indiana, Pennsylvania, Texas) offering doctorates is still an upstart. In the context in

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which I am speaking, the professional society does not generate strength in a discipline so much as respond to and reflect strength already demonstrated. Rather, it is the nonacademic society that on occasion has stimulated folkloric enterprises.

More specifically, the society needs a metropolitan urban setting for maximum results. The French folklore movement gathered momentum in Paris in the 1880's, launched by a monthly dinner first held on February 14, 1882, attended by such dedicated folklorists as Paul Sébillot, Henri Gaidoz, Gaston Paris, Eugène Rolland, and Loys Brueyre. Known as the Dinner of Mother Goose, in honor of Charles Perrault's *Contes de ma mère L'oye*, the occasion proved a sturdy and congenial forum, and on February 28, 1895 reached the one hundred mark, in a gala celebration marred by the absence of Gaidoz, who by this time had become a bitter critic and rival of Sébillot. Their intellectual differences — Gaidoz charged Sébillot with superficial, repetitive, and careless scholarship — led to a furious contretemps as to who had originally conceived of the dinner, Gaidoz' close friend Rolland or credit-taking Sébillot. In 1886 Rolland and Gaidoz had departed from the monthly dinner of Mother Goose and initiated their own weekly dinner at the Café Voltaire, where Rolland conducted an informal seminar in folklore. Each leader founded a journal, *Mélusine* edited by Gaidoz and *Revue des traditions populaires* edited by Sébillot, in which the two giants flailed at each other. So in France the power base for the great burst of folklore activity from 1882 to the first World War turned out to be Parisian supper clubs of savants devoted to the study of oral literature.

While the urban nexus has not satisfied the needs of folklorists in the United States, for short periods it has served their purposes. A Harvard group led by Francis James Child formed a Cambridge Folklore Society which helped stimulate the founding of the American Folklore Society in 1888. By the quirk of history, Chicago proved to be the city most sympathetic to folkloric enterprise, and briefly, in 1892 and 1893, a Chicago Folk-Lore Society pitted its humanistic and belletristric perspective against the anthropological and scientific mode of the American Folklore Society. This society owed its existence to the ardor of a retired United States naval officer, Lieutenant Fletcher S. Bassett, who published, in Chicago, *Legends and Superstitions of the Sea and of*

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Sailors in all Lands and at all Times, a scrapbook of clippings with little design or method, but a testimonial to his amateur zeal. At his instigation and his wife's invitation an organizational meeting was held on December 12, 1891 in the Art Institute Building, and Bassett became the secretary and moving spirit until his death within the year, October 19, 1892. In the less than a year of his tenure Bassett published four numbers of *The Folk-Lorist*, *Journal of the Chicago Folk-Lore Society* and the first and only number of the Chicago Folk-Lore Society's Publications, *The Folk-Lore Manual*, a collector's guide partly modeled on George Laurence Gomme's and Paul Sébillot's handbooks. In addition he organized an International Folk-Lore Congress in connection with the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, at which seventy papers were presented and the bulk subsequently published in the proceedings of the congress. Described as 'The Third International Folk-Lore Congress', the Chicago meeting followed those at Paris in 1889 and London in 1891 in a sequel that Bassett undoubtedly hoped would establish Chicago folkloristically on a par with the other great metropolises. In his imperial schemes Bassett thought of making Chicago the center of American folklore activities, and appointed members-at-large as presidents of the Tennessee, Louisiana, and Minnesota branches of the Chicago Folk-Lore Society. Abroad he claimed correspondents in Latin America, Europe, and Asia. In the United States he corresponded with such prominent literary figures as Hamlin Garland, Joel Chandler Harris, George Washington Cable, and Mary Hartwell Catherwood. Cable spoke at the second meeting of the society on imagination in folklore, related a folktale of the wind in the forest, and sang the song of the wind in Creole French. Harriet Monroe, founder of the celebrated *Poetry* magazine in Chicago, belonged to the society. Bassett gathered members from a cross-section of Chicago people, among the professions, the business world, the arts, the armed services, the social elite. Mrs Potter Palmer, whose family owned the famous Palmer House in Chicago, served as a director of the Society. For one exhilarating year, in their meetings in private homes, at the Newberry Library, or in the Art Institute, Chicagoans read papers, gave talks, watched lantern slides, and avidly discussed Messiah crazes among the Indians, Jewish wedding ceremonies in the middle ages, and customs and costumes

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of Asian peoples. When Bassset died the society collapsed and was virtually forgotten until Norwood Editions reprinted their publications this year (1973).

Curiously, New York has never witnessed a folklore boom. The New York Folklore Society originated in 1945 upstate, at Cooperstown, where its journal, the *New York Folklore Quarterly*, is edited. State folklore societies have contributed relatively little to the discipline of folklore, lacking any real power base, and have functioned mainly as annual congregation points for the enjoyment of folk performance and the reading of local color papers. These societies, and their journals, bulletins, and newsletters, flourish and wither according to the drive of personalities resident in the state. The most active, at this writing, are those in Tennessee, Kentucky, Texas, New York, California, and Louisiana. Bearing out my thesis of the urban focus of folklore organization, a new society, the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, has recently begun to issue a journal of surprising merit. This group draws on the human and institutional resources of the Washington, D.C. area, in which are found the Folksong Archive of the Library of Congress, the University of Maryland with an active folklore program, and the Smithsonian Institution with a few folklore buffs on its staff.

In Japan, a private institute in the capital city, Tokyo, for a time provided the base for the Japanese folklore movement. One scholar of national eminence, Kunio Yanagita, founded the study of folklore in his country and attracted a coterie of disciples centered in the Minzokugaku Kenkyūshō, the Japanese Folklore Institute. Physically this institute consisted of a large wing of the house in which lived Professor Yanagita's daughter and son-in-law, a scientist. This wing contained Yanagita's extensive library and a number of working desks, to which regularly came various staff members of the institute, some, like Toichi Mabuchi and Keigo Seki, well-known scholars at universities in Tokyo. Venerable Professor Yanagita, born in 1875, lived in a smaller home next door, and held court with his acolytes when they dropped by to see him. In 1956–57 I spent a year in Japan as Fulbright Visiting Professor at the University of Tokyo, and by good fortune resided in the Seijo district of Tokyo where the Minzokugaku Kenkyūshō was located. In spite of the language barrier I learned

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something of the institute's activities from manuscripts in English and through personal contacts. For example, Yanagita and his institute sponsored two intensive surveys of *Studies in Mountain Village Life* (1937) and *Studies in Fishing Village Life* (1949) which enlisted the aid of local school teachers and village officials in systematically combing the remote farming and fishing communities whose daily life was permeated with magic and ritual. In such enterprises the Tokyo institute reached out into the farthest corners and pockets of Japanese traditional culture. During my year there I conceived the idea of a special volume of research essays by the Yanagita school to be translated into English, and through the benison of Yanagita-*sensei*, who contributed a brief interview, the papers were assembled and, after years of arduous translating and editing, published as *Studies in Japanese Folklore* (1963). Yet, successful as were the conferences, projects, and publications promoted by the institute, it rested on too slender a base, the reputation and personal resources of one famous scholar-diplomat. Possessing no university affiliation, the institute could offer no formal courses in folklore and train no degree-pursuing classes of students, although it encouraged the folklore-minded. In the Japanese family tradition, Yanagita's son-in-law Ichirō Hori engaged in folklore studies, specializing in Japanese folk religion, and his grandaughter Yaeko Yanagita journeyed to America to complete an M.A. degree in folklore at Indiana University. But more than a family inheritance was needed, and the Minzokugaku Kenkyūshō closed its doors the very year I was there, in the spring of 1957, for lack of financial and institutional support.

The clearest case of a metropolitan power base for folklore studies would seem to be the Folklore Society itself, which might well have been called the London Folklore Society. Its achievements in the two decades from its founding in 1878 until the end of the century inspire awe: the high excellence of the journal, the number and quality of special publications, the electricity generated by the monthly meetings, the excitement of the international congress of 1891 in London. The great advantage of London, unlike any city in the United States, is of course its accessibility for the out-of-towner. So Edwin Sidney Hartland could live in Gloucester, a city of which he became mayor, and still regularly participate in the London meetings. George Laurence Gomme,

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another member of the brilliant group I have called the 'great team' of English folklorists, made his livelihood as clerk of the London County Council and wrote on the history of London as well as on folklore as an historical science. Associations of private scholars could flourish in nineteenth century London, and one thinks of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, the Camden, the Percy, the Shakespeare, and others which furnished models for the Folklore Society. How bankers, solicitors, civil servants, journalists, publishers could find the time, energy, and means to turn productive author-scholars remains a mystery, but clearly Lang and Gomme and Hartland and Clodd and Nutt and Jacobs acted as catalysts upon each other and upon others whom they attracted into the society. Individuals of breadth and multiple talents, they wrote on various subjects in addition to folklore and mixed in several intellectual circles, as Clodd has revealed in his book of personal vignettes titled *Memories*. Accordingly they spread the gospel of folklore far more widely than could the conventional academic scholar. Unable themselves, as Londoners with full-time occupations, to engage in fieldwork, they supplied the theoretical frame and the personal encouragement for vicars and country ladies and colonial administrators to collect folklore survivals from 'peasants 'and 'savages'.

London's Folklore Society ceased to serve as a power base for the science of folklore in the years following the first World War. With the decline of the private scholar and the rise of the graduate school, the metropolitan society lost much of its constituency and could not reach the new generation. One need only look at the sharply reduced size of the volumes of the society's journal from World War I on to see the diminution of resources. In academic circles the dons sneer openly at the Folklore Society as an antiquarian club; witness the snide comment by the *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer of *The British Folklorists*, a self-admitted social anthropologist, that the Folklore Society might come of age if its officers ever got around to reading Lévi-Strauss! The unequal competition between the university and the urban society in the present century is seen in the demise of the Cambridgeshire Folklore Society, which enjoyed its moments in the 1930's, with the participation of such scholars as Edward M. Wilson and Kenneth Jackson who temporarily left their specialties of Spanish

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and Celtic literatures of an evening to converse with East Anglian farmers about olden lore. But the day came when, as the society's minutes sadly state, the group dissolved itself. Yet members scattered throughout the Cambridge University faculties possessed an active interest in folklore, as I discovered during my sabbatical year spent in Cambridge in 1964–65, and one, the anthropologist Reo Fortune, even offered lectures on folklore and mythology, attended by only two students, reading in English literature. The head of the anthropology department, Meyer Fortes, made no attempt to conceal his disdain for folklore studies, and told me that a mutual friend had gone into folklore because he had failed as an anthropologist.

Another possible power base for the folklorists is the museum, specifically the ethnographic or outdoor or open-air or folk or historical museum, all somewhat overlapping designations. Two in North America have shown particular partiality to folklorists. The National Museum of Man in Ottawa in 1970 created as one of its five units a Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, an outgrowth of the efforts of the indefatigable Canadian folklorist Marius Barbeau. In the words of the Centre's head, Robert Klymasz, a Ph.D. in folklore from Indiana University, it 'functions as the country's leading folklore research center'.[1] The Centre employs a permanent staff and also awards contracts to fieldworkers with the understanding that all materials collected will be deposited with the museum. Besides Dr Klymasz, three Indiana University doctoral candidates in folklore, each with a competence in an ethnic subculture, currently hold staff positions at the Centre, and a number of other pre- and post-doctoral folklorists, including Linda Dégh and Jan Brunvand, have spent summers in the field in Canada on National Museum of Man grants. It is a tragedy of the United States situation that funds for fieldwork are not forthcoming and that our graduate students must journey to Canada and undertake projects relating to the Canadian rather than the American experience — although by the same token, from a larger point of view, the cause of folklore benefits. The main energy of the Centre, reflecting the divisive Anglo-French political situation, is directed toward the forty ethnic groups found

[1] Robert Klymasz, 'Folklore Studies at the National Museum of Man, Canada,' *Folklore Forum* 5:1 (January 1972): 11–13.

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over the three million square miles of Canadian soil. Klymasz himself, for instance, specializes in the Ukrainians of western Canada. As small homogeneous countries like Finland and Ireland endeavor to assert their cultural unity and independence from overweaning neighbors through folklore, so vast heterogeneous Canada seeks to divert attention from the hostility between two major ethnic blocs by emphasizing cultural pluralism through folklore

The folklorist at the National Museum of Canada enjoys a free rein to pursue his ethnic area, but he, or she, is expected to undertake educational and research responsibilities as well, through public lectures, popular articles, and substantial monographs. Klymasz reports that priorities in field research are given to artifacts over oral literature, as tangible contributions to the museum's exhibits and displays. How successfully folklorists will operate in this highly attractive but unstructured situation remains to be seen. Without the stimuli and pressures of university life, there is always the risk they will channel their forces into public relations.

Parenthetically it should be remarked that the Museum does not replace academic programs in Canadian universities. Departments of folklore exist at Laval University in Quebec and Memorial University in St Johns, Newfoundland, directed by Luc Lacourcière and Herbert Halpert and devoted respectively to French-Canadian and Anglo-Celtic traditions, while Elli Köngäs Maranda teaches folklore at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

A unique and imaginative experiment at Cooperstown in upstate New York has linked a folk museum to a degree-granting instructional program. Louis C. Jones conceived this plan after he moved from the faculty of the New York State Teachers College at Albany, where he had taught courses in folklore, to the directorship of the New York State Historical Society sixty miles away in Cooperstown The Society's properties include an outdoor. Farmer's Museum reconstructing the buildings, crafts, and milieu of a nineteenth century agricultural village, and the James Fenimore Cooper House on Lake Otsego, donated by the family of the novelist and housing an extensive folk art collection from the region. These attractions draw many thousands of visiting tourists, but Jones initiated an entirely new function for the museum complex, and devised a master's degree program in

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museum training and methods of folklife study. The museum staff of curators and librarians formed the nucleus of a teaching faculty, to which Dr Jones added two folklorists from Indiana University, Bruce Buckley and Roderick Roberts. For accreditation he turned to the nearest unit of the State University of New York system, twenty miles away at Oneonta, and worked out an arrangement whereby his instructors received appointments to the Oneonta faculty and his students earned their M.A.'s through SUNY at Oneonta. For graduate fellowships he turned to the foundations, and then advertised the fellowships in appropriate media. Over the past dozen years the Cooperstown program has conferred annually twenty master's degrees to students who learn museum management at first hand and undertake folklore and folklife field trips into the surrounding countryside. Most of these M.A. holders take museum positions, New York state abounding in local history museums, but some continue on in doctoral folklore programs at Pennsylvania and Indiana. Henry Glassie, now associate professor of folklore at Indiana University, holds an M.A. from Cooperstown and a Ph.D. in folklore from the University of Pennsylvania.

How far the folk museum can or will go in providing a power base for folklorists remains an open question. Appreciation for folklife studies has led to increasingly close ties between folklore scholars and folk museum directors and curators. This past April 28 I attended a regional folklore conference at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, at which one panel of folk museum spokesmen dealt with the theme 'The Museum is the Message: Open Air Museums and Education'. Their reports on Plimouth Plantation and Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts and the Farmer's Museum in New York made clear that these outdoor historical museums had indeed become power bases of the museum world, with revenues from hundreds of thousands of visitors a year and large staffs, some of whom were deeply engaged in research and publication on life of the common man in earlier days. In the peak summertime season Old Sturbridge enlarges its staff to seven hundred persons. These outdoor museum complexes become stages for seminars, workshops, conferences, folk festivals; they sell books; they apply to foundations for research grants. At present their staffs are largely drawn

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from the ranks of archaeologists, historians, and museologists, but the occasional folklorist turns up in their number, and more may be expected to do so.

A related instance of a museum-type operation as a conceivable power base for folklore is the Country Music Foundation in Nashville, Tennessee, the center of the music recording industry in the United States, particularly those forms known as country, western, rock, and hillbilly. This Foundation, created by the big recording companies, supports a museum devoted to the history of country music and its celebrities. This past year an Indiana University doctoral candidate in folklore, William Ivey, was appointed director of the Country Music Foundation. During his graduate career in Bloomington Ivey presented two weekly programs over the university radio station, one on folk music, 'Our Singing Heritage', and one on popular music, 'The Sound of Pop', and so possessed excellent qualifications for the Nashville position. He plans to use its resources to develop a teaching and research center in folk and popular music. Already he has appointed a second Indiana folklore doctoral candidate to his staff, Howard Marshall; initiated a journal of country music; offered research grants for visiting scholars; discussed joint courses with institutions in the area, such as Vanderbilt University; and agreed to host the 1973 annual meeting of the American Folklore Society.

Examples of prominent folklore scholars based in museums can be multiplied. We think, for example, of Carl-Herman Tillhagen in the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm, of Robert Wildhaber, longtime director of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Basel, of Iorwerth Peate at the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagan's Castle. The Society for Folklife Studies in Great Britain represents in large part a museum-curator constituency. Yet ultimately all these folklore centers — the indoor and outdoor museum, the urban society, the research institute and archives — lack the most essential element for the perpetuation of folklore as a discipline, namely the formal training of young people. Because this is its primary function, the university department of folklore must be accounted the strongest power base for the discipline of folklore at the present point in time. The department holds the advantage over the chair in sponsoring a group of professional folklorists rather than one prima donna.

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In saying this I do not elevate the academic scholar over the private scholar, nor the university over the independent museum, society, or institute. No achievement could be grander than that of the English Folklore Society in the 1880's and the '90's. But now the professional training of young folklorists, like the training of physicists and chemists, sociologists and anthropologists, must take place in the university if the discipline is to survive.

Since coming to Indiana University in 1957, as chairman of the committee on folklore, I have received an extended liberal education in the ways and means of establishing, maintaining, and expanding a folklore beachhead in the intensely competitive arena of an American university. Already won by Stith Thompson, who had retired in 1955, were administrative approval of the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in folklore, a separate room of the university library housing a folklore collection of some 15,000 titles, and a folklore monographs series subsidized by $2000 a year. There were no budget lines for a faculty or for student assistantships or fellowships, only a few hundred dollars for a half-time secretary. No funds were earmarked for maintenance of the folklore library, so the room was kept locked and keys circulated among the few users. Books kept disappearing but the librarian informed me that it was cheaper to lose a few books each year than to pay the salary of an attendant. The physical facilities consisted of one room in the library next to the folklore collection, in which the chairman met with students, the secretary pecked at the typewriter, visitors peeked into the cabinets that housed the folklore archives, and Stith Thompson, professor emeritus, conferred with his research assistant. In 1957 some half dozen graduate students were seeking higher degrees in folklore. The courses they took originated almost entirely with established departments. That is, the course on the English and Scottish popular ballad belonged to the English department and would be cross-listed under Folklore. In effect, the folklore program simply drew upon the existing faculty and curricular resources of the university. I myself was budgeted full-time in the history department, and all the members of the folklore committee similarly were budgeted in their respective departments of anthropology, English, Spanish and so on. By such means the university cautiously launched new programs with a minimum of outlay. The programs might grow into departments,

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remain indefinitely in a limbo status, or wither away. They had to prove their vitality.

The situation in the spring of 1973 contrasts happily with that of the fall of 1957. Under the title of the Folklore Institute, the interdepartmental committee has blossomed into an autonomous department with a budget of a quarter of a million dollars. The Institute has six full faculty lines and four more (including myself) on joint appointments with other departments, for a total of 8.3 FTE, the university shorthand for full time employment. In addition six faculty in other departments hold the title Fellows of the Folklore Institute and meet and vote with the department, in recognition of their commitment to teaching and research in folklore. The physical properties of the Institute include two private houses, one used for offices of faculty, editorial assistants, and two full-time secretaries, and the other for the offices of the teaching associates and the manuscript Folklore Archives. A third facility is the Archives of Traditional Music, housed in Maxwell Hall, with its own staff of a director, associate director, librarian, and four graduate assistants. The Institute currently supports some twenty teaching, editorial, archives, and library assistants. In the bulletins of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Graduate School are listed fifty-four courses originating with the Folklore Department. One hundred and fifty graduate students pursue the M.A. and Ph.D. degree in Folklore, of whom ninety are on campus in Bloomington. Enrolment in undergraduate courses runs about fifteen hundred students, and the new undergraduate major, now in its second year, has attracted twenty-nine students. Folklore courses are also taught in the Evening Division unit on the Bloomington campus, and on regional campuses of Indiana University at Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Kokomo, and Columbus, staffed by commuting doctoral candidates. The forty-eight Ph.D.'s produced since 1957 are established in American and foreign universities and sending us their own best students. For next fall we have admitted fifty-three well qualified new graduate students.

There are three comments I wish to make on this seemingly joyful picture. The first is that the getting from 1957 to 1973 is a chronicle of continual and unrelenting endeavor on a number of fronts: the foundations, the central administration, the space

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committee, the curriculum committee, the university press, the library staff, the dean's office, the regional campus officials, the evening division office, the conference bureau, the housing office, and on and on. Each new advance seemed to invite a new crisis. The most pressing immediate need of the program was funds for graduate student fellowships. Two successful competitions, in 1960 and 1961, one for a Federal grant under title four of the National Defense Education Act and another an internal joust with other departments and programs for Ford Foundation funds awarded the university to develop foreign area studies, yielded a bounty of so-called soft money, the term used to distinguish outside support from the hard money of the university budget. With the NDEA grant I was able to appoint graduate students as assistants in the folklore library and kill two birds with one stone: protect the library and provide graduate assistantships. But the eight Ford one-year fellowships and the NDEA five package fellowships for three years proved an embarrassment of riches, for few prospective graduate students knew about folklore as a discipline, and we could barely get enough applications to be able to dispense our largesse. Then the *Wall Street Journal* and the Congress of the United States began taking pot shots at federal grants for national defense to subjects like folklore, church music, and ceramics, and eventually, despite letters I wrote senators and congressmen, Congress struck out folklore under the revised bill. Still, the funds made available for fellowships, visiting professorships, and expanded publications did strengthen the program to the point where, in 1963, I applied for departmental status. With the support of John W. Ashton, dean of the graduate school who was himself a folklorist, the administration gave its blessing. This was the moment of transformation, second only to the securing by Stith Thompson, then himself the graduate dean, of the doctoral degree program in 1949, when folklore became an independent department with hard money budget lines for faculty and graduate assistants. Another milestone was reached in 1968 with the establishing of teaching assistantships for our graduate students. The new university library had just gone into operation, and consequently our separate collection, while still preserving its identity in an open wing, enjoyed the same protection as the rest of the books and no longer needed special supervisors. At the same

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time our NDEA grant that maintained the library assistantships had run out. So the question was, how could we support our worthiest graduate students? At this juncture a broad-scale revision of the whole undergraduate curriculum of the College of Arts and Sciences went into effect, one feature of which was a so-called foreign culture option that counted as a distribution requirement for the various majors. Folklore was listed among the courses satisfying the option, and the enrollment of our introductory courses suddenly zoomed. To my chagrin these courses had never drawn more than thirty or forty students, but since folklore was then only a graduate department, the undergraduate courses received little heed. Now that they fulfilled a requirement, students seeking an attractive elective poured into 'Introduction to Folklore', 'American Folklore' and 'World's Folk Music Traditions' by the hundreds. One happy consequence was hard money budgeting by the dean's office for teaching assistants to handle sections, as in the large departments. Our best doctoral candidates could now benefit from actual classroom experience. Since we were entering an era when the undergraduate college was challenging the graduate school as the focus of administrative attention, I now felt emboldened to propose an undergraduate major, and one day in the spring of 1970, after a year's preliminary discussion, I entered the room of the curriculum committee carrying a carton of papers, reproduced seventeen times so they could be perused by each committee member. The task of preparing the proposals — in which I received major assistance from my junior colleague Robert Adams — would compare to the writing of a monograph. Although this was the new era of contraction rather than expansion, the committee approved our folklore request, in a time when only currently fashionable subjects, such as computer sciences, Afro-American Studies, and environmental studies, could achieve the status of the undergraduate major.

In the long stretch from 1957 to 1973, one constant problem concerned the placement of our Ph.D.'s, and here too we registered striking success. People constantly asked me, 'What will happen to all your Ph.D.'s?' A fair question, since they could not apply for positions in nonexistent departments of folklore. Well, the Ph.D.'s and M.A.'s have all found positions, and good positions,

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at the University of California at Berkeley and at Los Angeles, at the Universities of Kansas, Utah, Maine, Massachusetts, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, at Washington State University, Columbia University, Indiana University, Wayne State University, Pennsylvania State University, Temple University, and in Canada at the University of British Columbia, University of Manitoba, Memorial University, usually in departments of English or anthropology, rarely in history. Foreign students are teaching at universities in Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, Egypt, Nigeria, the Sudan, Uganda, Italy. Alan Dundes attained full professorship at Berkeley at only thirty-three, within the anthropology department, and directs a folklore M.A. program that he initiated. But each position won represents a long dossier of supporting letters and documents, continuous explanation of and justification for the folklorist as a desirable faculty member, and a high caliber of Ph.D. holders.

A second general comment is that 1973 marks the crest of the wave for the folklore boom, and from now on for the foreseeable future the battle must be a holding operation. As American Universities shrink, and pare their budgets, and slice their faculties, and reduce their programs, folklore, which in the best conditions had unceasingly to fight for a foothold, must now make the fight under grim conditions. Each year the number and quality of applicants for admission to the Folklore Institute has gone up, while the amount of fellowship funds to distribute has gone down, so that for 1974 for the first time we have not one dollar to award, only a $900 deficit carried over from the year before. Simultaneously the job market is drying up, and not only are we not placing our prospective Ph.D.'s, but, for another dismal first, two of our nontenured Ph.D.'s have been released by their institutions. In the constricted atmosphere, departments have become ever more tighfisted with their fiefs. One of the departing folklore Ph.D.'s leaves an anthropology department at Wayne State University whose English department has just lost two folklorists to other institutions, but the rigid departmentalization of the American university structure allows no flexibility to transfer this highly qualified folklorist from one part of the academy to another. The fortunes of the Folklore Institute at Indiana University are intimately bound up with the fates of

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folklore programs and courses elsewhere. Two years ago the graduate department of folklore and folklife at the University of Pennsylvania teetered on the brink of extinction, but the mettle of its chairman, Kenneth Goldstein, won the day and it has now rebounded with vigor, abetted by the decision of the well-known linguistic anthropologist at Pennsylvania, Dell Hymes, to move from the anthropology to the folklore department. At the University of California at Los Angeles, where the Center for Folklore and Comparative Mythology has sheltered a strong folklore M.A. program, a three-year struggle for the Ph.D. in folklore seems doomed by administrative roadblocks, as two dozen holders of the M.A. wait in suspense, or drift to other fields, or even move to Indiana to enter our overcrowded institute. Meanwhile the plans for further expansion of the Folklore Institute, for instance in the creation of an outdoor folk museum for which Warren Roberts has been accumulating log cabins and other properties for some years, seem less and less likely of realization.

A third point deals with the *raison d'être* of all this academic infighting: the students. The opportunity to train students in folklore is the great prize which will make possible the continuation of folklore as a discipline. At Indiana University a legion of ninety graduate students in folklore make their energies felt in various ways: in a Folklore Student Association with its own meetings and invited speakers; in a journal, the *Folklore Forum*, that has become one of the established folklore publications in the country, although operating on a shoestring; in a gala annual event, now hoary with three years of tradition, the Pig Roast, a two-day campout and cookout signalizing the ritual end of the academic year and rebirth of the new seasonal round. Each new Ph.D. in folklore adds another crusader for the cause, another professional to tilt the balance against the dilettantes. It is the students who will read the books their seniors write on folklore, who will debate the issues, write the new books, and in their turn teach the next generation. Without the university department as a power base, where graduate students can learn theory and method and bibliography and convey their contagious enthusiasm to the rest of the world, folklore studies cannot in the twentieth century hope to achieve the status of a professional discipline.

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II. The Intellectual Base

Whatever their power base, folklorists claiming a discipline will have to justify their existence on intellectual grounds. The well established subjects no longer have to explain their purposes. History attempts to record man's past. Political science studies the process of government. But what does folklore aspire to do? Without some large philosophic purpose the business of folklore becomes a mere matter of collecting, recording, transcribing, archiving, the endless amassing of materials against the day when some creative scholar will interpret them. Or the examiner of folk traditions may be impelled by nostalgic antiquarian interests in the odd customs and notions of a bygone day. In the periods of greatest strength, students of folklore have proved themselves to be far more than casual antiquaries or mindless collectors. The Great Team shared a common premise, that surviving folklore — and to them, following Tylor's formulation, all folklore was survivals — mirrored the mind of early man, and through scrupulous inspection of these survivals they could recapture the world view of their prehistoric forebears. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm looked at the matter differently, and considered household tales and peasant supernaturalism as reflecting in fragmented form an ancient high Germanic culture. No such all-governing hypothesis directs the energies of folklorists today, who frequently find difficulty in expressing their teleology, but I would say they are concerned with the study of traditional culture, or the unofficial culture, or the folk culture, as opposed to the elite culture, not for the sake of proving a thesis but to learn about the mass of mankind overlooked by the conventional disciplines. Historians write histories of the elite, the successful, the visible; literary scholars study elitist writings; and the critics of the arts similarly confine their attention to the fine arts. Anthropologists venture far off the beaten track, and sociologists look at people statistically. For an instance, I was doing fieldwork in the steelmaking city of Gary, Indiana, and learned that the sociology department had undertaken a project in Gary. Eagerly I inquired of the young man on the project what he was up to. He said he knew nothing about the project design, that he was simply being paid to knock on doors

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and fill in a questionnaire. Then he mailed the results back to Bloomington, where presumably some other hireling processed the data in the computer, and eventually the results as to the correlation between criminal propensity and the possession of indoor flush toilets would be published in a learned journal by the major professor. The folklorist, almost alone among his scholarly brethren, is talking to the nonelite, the folk. Increasingly his perspective is directed to the contemporaneity rather than the obsolescence of folklore, to the conception that folklore reflects the ethos of its own day, not of an era long past. Legends in the seventeenth century dealt with witches, in the twentieth century they deal with automobiles. The intellectual problems grow out of the materials; they concern questions of function, aesthetics, origins, transmission, communication, structure, stability, change, symbolic meaning, social value, historical content; there is no dearth of enigmas rooted in the condition of man.

Related to the philosophic view of the discipline is the broad vision of the field as a whole. People come into folklore studies from a variety of special interests, perhaps folksinging, or literary uses of myth, or African cultures, or occultism, but the mark of the professional is his comprehension of the whole domain. While the members of the Great Team possessed their individual specialties, each could and did write generally on the science of folklore. A community of discourse, a common vocabulary and set of interior references binds the practitioners of a discipline, who respond with conditioned reflexes to the mention of Child ballad numbers, or the Thompson motif-index code, or Bolte and Polívka's *Anmerkungen*, or the *Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie*. Where such communal associations are lacking, a discipline scarcely exists. What unifies the profession of American history above all other factors is the inheritance by the current generation of historians of hallowed predecessors — Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles Beard, Carl Becker, Vernon Louis Parrington — whom they relentlessly pillory in a father-figure love–hate relationship. Familiar outlines of the subject matter also provide a sense of fellowship to members of a discipline. American historians, whatever their specialization, share a series of comfortable landmarks: the colonial period, the Revolution, the westward movement, the early national period, the Civil War, the Gilded

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Age, America as a world power, the New Deal, the atomic age. What are the familiar zones of the folklorist? Surveys and textbooks indicate the coming of age of a subject; George W. Cox produced an *Introduction to the Science of Comparative Mythology and Folk-Lore* in 1881 based on the solar interpretation of Max Müller and fourteen years later Marian Cox issued *An Introduction to Folklore* redirecting folk studies to the animistic theory of Edward B. Taylor. This past year in a volume entitled *Folklore and Folklife, an Introduction* I enlisted the aid of a number of professional folklorists in charting our province. At one pole the oral genres of folk narrative, folk poetry, and smaller forms seem clear cut. At the other end the categories of material culture, ranged under the relatively new term 'folk life', do not so readily fall into place. Folk art, folk crafts, and folk architecture seem to hang together as all involving traditional handiwork, while the performing arts of folk music, folk dance, folk drama, and folk festival appear to form another cluster. Folk costume and folk cuisine belong somewhere in the material culture area, while folk religion and folk medicine, involving belief, ritual, and custom, spread over the genres and material culture in ways not easily classified. Still the subject has sufficiently established itself so that several textbooks — two by my own students Jan Brunvand and Alan Dundes — have found ready markets in the United States. When Alexander Krappe published *The Science of Folklore* in 1930, he excluded all American examples on the grounds that folklore in the classic sense did not exist in the United States, and in saying so he simply reflected the state of scholarship of the time.

Another mark of a discipline is its ability to set and define standards of worth. In folklore this ability is particularly pressing, since the subject matter so lends itself to dilution, distortion, sentimentalizing, and commercializing, and further since any bystander may pose as an authority on a topic apparently in the public domain. To call attention to this situation I introduced the word 'fakelore' in 1950 as a label for spurious goods posing as folklore. One sign of a healthy discipline of folkloristics will be its quickness to dismiss the scissors-and-paste collections, the jolly children's books, the tourist-targeted legends, and similar potboilers that swamp publishers' lists. The excellence of the Victorian folklorists is nowhere more manifest than in the caliber

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of their reviews in *Folk-Lore* during the peak years of the 1880's and '90's. All the Great Team shared a spirit of mounting excitement as their subject unfolded, and they viewed additions to the growing shelf of worthy folklore studies and collections as items in which they held a personal stake. Secure in their society, their journal, and their science, they gave little heed to the popularizers of their day, such as Sabine Baring-Gould and Thomas Firminger Thiselton-Dyer, who were still a cut above the fakelorists of today. In the bibliography he appended to his pamphlet on *The Fairy Mythology of Shakespeare* Alfred Nutt summarily dismissed Thiselton-Dyer's *Folk Lore of Shakespeare* by saying it 'cannot be recommended', and wasted no further words. Here is Sidney Hartland easily disposing of a six volume series of *Folk-lore and Legends* for various countries, issued in 1889 and 1890 for a gullible public that still exists: 'It is not easy to know for what purpose the collection entitled *Folk-lore and Legends* has been published, beyond that of producing pleasant little books good in print and paper, and suitable for whiling away an idle hour. . . . It only purports to be "a selection", and no hint is afforded as to the source of any of the tales. . . . This precludes all scientific use of the volumes. And yet the author is evidently impressed with a genuine love of folk-tales, and has some knowledge of the subject. He might do good work, if he would go about it the right way.'[2] This voice of authority sounded throughout the golden two decades at the century's end, when folklore was demonstrably a discipline, or a science in the language of the time. It does not sound today. I do not think I am telling tales out of school to say that once at a meeting of the Folklore Society I heard the review editor walking up and down the aisle offering books for review to any taker, like a costermonger crying her wares. And if the alleged discipline cannot review authoritatively in its own journal, then it will likely not control the influential media. The *Times Literary Supplement* review of *The British Folklorists, a History* should of course have gone to a folklorist, but instead it was sent to a social anthropologist. On internal evidence, namely the reverence for Lévi-Strauss and the allusion of the Opies' *Games of Street and Playground*, which he had reviewed in *The Listener*, and on general likelihood, since he is a glamor reviewer for the intellectual journals, I think it was

[2] *Folklore-Lore* 2 (1891): 111.

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Edmund Leach, but in any event the opinions were the stereotypic prejudices of British anthropologists toward folklore. The point is not to criticize their inexpertness on folklore, for, generally speaking, no practitioner of one discipline ever understands more than dimly the inner workings of another, but to underscore the weakness of folklore as an established discipline. In an earlier period Lang or Clodd would have reviewed such a book.

In the United States the fakelore issue provided the test and American folklorists flunked it badly when Ben Botkin began issuing his treasuries in the 1940's and they praised them as lavishly as the popular press. No folklore Ph.D.'s were around in the '40's, and now that they exist the standards of reviewing have appreciated considerably, although soft spots remain, evident in the reception so far being accorded Duncan Emrich's *Folklore on the American Land*, a super-packaged treasury of sentimental filler and flag-waving hoopla, which was lauded in a two-page advertisement in the *Journal of American Folklore* in blurbs from folklorists who should know better. The publication is American hucksterism at its worst, even to Emrich canvassing the country on the long-distance telephone soliciting praise, adoptions, and favoring reviews. My own review in the April 1973 number of *Western Folklore* continues the battle against fakelore begun in the '40's with little support, and one would have hoped that by now the battle was fairly won.

Yet another criterion for the intellectual strength of a discipline is the sense of its own identity, as manifested, in one instance, in the history of its unfolding and the biographies of its luminaries. Stirrings in this direction registered in the past several years include a collective group of biographical sketches of and by Nordic folklorists, and histories of Finnish and British folklorists. At the last meeting of the American Folklore Society, November 1972 in Austin, Texas, younger scholars devoted two sessions to the history of folkloristics, and the papers of one session will be published in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of the Folklore Institute*. Two biographies of the Grimms, written by non-folklorists, Ruth Michaelis-Jena and Michael Peppard, supply welcome details about the private and professional lives of the founders of folklore studies, but they lack the most elementary knowledge of folkloristics. Historical and biographical writings

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about a discipline require more than good will and devotion to the subject, and can easily degenerate into lifeless catalogues. A next step forward would be in-depth biographical and critical portraits of the Great Team. The American Folklore Society has under way an oral history of itself based on tape-recorded interviews by younger folklorists of its elder statesmen, turned into informants. Alan Dundes is engaged on a European-wide biographical history of the founding fathers of folklore.

Still a further sign of the vitality of a discipline can be seen in its relationships with adjacent fields of learning. Does the given subject influence and render an impact upon them or is it a borrower dependent upon their intellectual capital? There is little question about the spinoff from folklore in the 1878 to 1914 period in England, when the prominence of the stellar folklorists and the national publicity given the 1891 congress made folklore a household word. Andrew Lang in his monthly column 'At the Sign of the Ship' in *Longman's Magazine* regularly inserted folkloric items and conducted running dialogues on customs and beliefs with correspondents drawn from the general readership.

Today we see a reversed picture. Two of the most notable scholarly works on folklore since 1970, Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic* and Alan Macfarlane's *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, closely complementary treatises, one the panoramic view the other the pinpointing case study of supernatural belief, come from historians not folklorists. Further, when they looked to another discipline for assistance, they turned to anthropology. Thomas is an Oxford don, who directed Macfarlane's dissertation, and at Oxford, as at Cambridge, there are no folklorists to talk to, but social anthropologists wear the mantle of Tylor and have dealt with witches of a sort, in tribal Africa, so Thomas and Macfarlane attempted, not very successfully, to shed some light on seventeenth century credence in witchcraft from analogies with contemporary African belief systems. Unfortunately the Africans visited by anthropologists lived in the bush rather than in town, a factor which somewhat skewed the analogy, if it ever really existed at all. On the side of folklore there stands the magnificent *Dictionary of British Folk-Tales* by Katharine Briggs, who determinedly wrested a folklore Ph.D. out of Oxford when none was available, and who maintains

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the noble tradition of the great Victorians. The *Dictionary*, revealing the unsuspected fecundity of English oral narrative to be ferreted from printed sources, is one of those landmark works produced in one discipline to which other disciplines pay tribute in footnotes. Scholars of English literature, for instance, will need to become friends with the *Dictionary*.

In the United States folklorists are gradually making their presence felt, particularly in newer academic realms that overflow the conventional disciplines. A new beachhead was established in 1971 when Yale University appointed William Ferris, a folklore Ph.D. from Pennsylvania, as assistant professor of American Studies and Afro-American Studies, two area programs found on a number of American campuses. A specialist in the oral and material folklore of Mississippi blacks, Ferris has added the motion picture camera to the tape recorder as a field tool. Since arriving at Yale he has taught American folklore to over two hundred undergraduates, he writes in the May 1973 issue of the *Yale Alumni Magazine*. At the University of Texas folklorist Roger Abrahams, who has collected and written perceptively on northern urban Negro traditions, has served as acting director of their Afro-American Studies Center. American black culture is of course significantly an oral culture.

Oral history constitutes another new academic constituency, directed toward historical interviews of living personalities whose taped recollections can serve historians as a complementary source to the printed word and archival document. But the Oral History Association leans strongly to the elitist perspective of conventional history. At the 1971 meeting of the association I chaired a panel on 'The Oral Historian and the Folklorist', at which the folklorists endeavored to persuade the audience that the technique of the tape-recorded interview could be extended from the elite to the folk, and thereby greatly enrich the source materials of the social historian. These papers have been printed in the proceedings of the sixth annual conference.

Another booming new enterprise is known as popular culture, and the Popular Culture Association in its third annual meeting, held at Indianapolis this past April 1973, displayed 150 papers on topics involving the comics (three sessions), films (half a dozen sessions), television, science fiction, curricula, popular music, the

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automobile, women in the media, western fiction, the occult, toys, sports, beer cans, popular food, popular architecture, popular culture, and so on. Folklore was plentifully represented in this mèlange, in sessions on comparative mythology, folklore and mass media, folklore and popular culture, and American minstrelsy.

Yet another rising tide of academic interest can be identified as urban studies, and folklore has already made a move in this direction, in the symposium on *The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition*, published in 1971 by the American Folklore Society. What these trends suggest is a series of new groupings within the humanities that seek to overturn the elitist, highbrow, rarefied and to a large extent stultifying approach of the established disciplines and get closer to the flavor of common life. In this new thrust, folklore studies will clearly play a key role. With the established disciplines folklore has made little headway, even in supposedly sympathetic fields such as English literature and anthropology.

Finally we come to the question of methodology. Each discipline has its own methodology; does folklore? As one who gives a pro-seminar each year to incoming graduate students on folklore theory and techniques, without more than scratching the surface, I find the question vexing. The professional folklorist must master the techniques of fieldwork with oral literature, folk music, and material culture. He must learn a deceptive terminology and a complex multi-lingual bibliography. He must become familiar with methods of tale-typing and motif-indexing; of comparative annotation; of structural analysis; of archival use; of sifting printed sources; of identifying folk artifacts; of obtaining informant histories; of folk-atlas mapping; of examining literary uses of folklore; of determining historical content in folk tradition; of separating traditional folklore from commercialized and ideological fakelore or *folklorismus*. Each one of these techniques could occupy a seminar by itself. Every practicing folklorist has undergone the experience, many times, of having colleagues or acquaintances ask him what the folklorist does, and somehow expecting a capsule answer in five minutes, or reading pronouncements by reviewers and other pundits who think they know what folklore is about, when they have never done more than skim Grimms' Fairy Tales, skipping the notes. Recently an English department chairman with whom I had been corresponding about an opening he had

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for a folklorist somewhat huffily inquired why I downgraded a candidate trained in literature who had interested himself in folklore. Would I place all such persons beyond the pale of bona fide teachers of folklore? he queried. Yes, I responded, in today's circumstances, since we have dozens of highly trained Ph.D.'s in folklore available, why should he choose a well-meaning amateur, especially in a field so plagued by cranks and crackpots? Would he hire a self-taught Milton or Chaucer specialist? Well, folklore had the same standards as literature, or history, or anthropology.

The methodology of folklore is sometimes criticized as soft and anecdotal, a serious charge in this day of the hard social sciences with their strivings to predict human behavior through models, paradigms, and tables of quantified data. Literary scholars receive grants to computerize their intuitions, and a sociologist colleague of mine has just obtained a handsome three year stipend to quantify the elements of morale. Yet human nature can never be reduced to statistical graphs, as Charles Sanders Pierce the mathematical philosopher asserted in 'Chance, Love and Logic'. Humanists, and especially folklorists, should take their stand on the quirkiness, the idiosyncrasies of man and woman. Tradition does not fetter the individual but provides boundaries for his expression. Anecdotes can illuminate the human condition more fully than paradigms. David Halbersham's highly acclaimed *The Best and the Brightest*, unveiling the tortuous descent of America into the Vietnam War through the frailties of her more gifted politicians, diplomats, and generals, relies primarily on anecdotes to draw their portraits.

Is folklore then a discipline? Pragmatically, it has reached the status of a discipline in various times and places; in England from 1888 to 1901, when the Great Team served as presidents of the Folklore Society; in Finland for the past century; in Germany for even longer; and one could extend the list. At times folklore has sunk to an antiquarian hobby or a storage enterprise. In the United States it qualifies as a discipline at a few university centers and in England at the University of Leeds, where Stewart Sanderson administers a doctorate in folklife studies. On philosophical grounds folklore is indeed a discipline, as proven by the achievements of illustrious scholars who have written in her name and contributed uniquely to man's knowledge about himself.

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